

(Hartford) – At Hartford City Hall today, **Senator Richard Blumenthal**, **Congressman John B. Larson**, and **Mayor Pedro E. Segarra**

announced a \$1 million grant for the Hartford Innovation Hub, awarded through the United States Economic Development Administration's Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) Challenge. The SC2 Challenge was created to assist cities with leveraging innovative ideas and approaches to create actionable economic development proposals and plans, fostering long-term economic development, job creation, and community prosperity. Established through an executive order from President Barack Obama, the SC2 Challenge was awarded to only three cities nationwide, including Hartford.

"This award is great news for growing businesses and jobs in the Hartford area. Hartford has shown leadership for its outstanding long term economic strategies and its entrepreneurial spirit, and I am proud that its excellence has been recognized through this challenge," said Senator Lieberman. "With this investment, residents will enjoy an even more vibrant community and an even more economically competitive city."

"This grant recognizes the promise our state's capital holds as a vibrant city committed to long-term growth. The resources provided by this grant will help Hartford attract more innovative entrepreneurs and boost existing industries in the state, increasing Connecticut's global competitiveness," said Senator Blumenthal. "I am grateful for this significant investment in our state, and I applaud Mayor Segarra for his strong work in advancing Hartford's economic agenda,"

"This highly competitive grant is a testament to Hartford's commitment to economic development and job creation," said Congressman Larson. "I know that the Hartford Innovation Hub will use this well earned funding to help the entrepreneurs and advanced manufacturers essential to our community's continued recovery continue to grow. The many stakeholders who worked together to secure this grant deserve our thanks as we look forward to the continued success of Hartford's businesses and communities."

"It says a lot that Hartford was one of three cities chosen for this highly competitive grant," says Mayor Segarra. "I commend the Connecticut Delegation for their continued efforts to expand opportunities for Hartford businesses, residents and visitors. Investing in our entrepreneurs is not only an investment in our economic future but also assists in securing Hartford's legacy of innovation."

"The hard work of strengthening American communities and our economy happens at the local level, and the Strong Cities, Strong Communities competition demonstrates the Obama Administration's commitment to improving cities and regions all across America," said Acting U.S. Commerce Secretary Rebecca Blank. "By challenging and encouraging experts in the field to come up with economic development plans for their individual cities, this grant program will support growth and create jobs in communities around the country."

The Hartford Innovation Hub (HIH), in collaboration with the City of Hartford, plans to nurture and support entrepreneurs as they develop, launch, and grow companies. The HIH will also support start-ups and Stage II companies by providing training, education, peer networks, mentoring, strategic and technical support. While serving as a change agent, the HIH aims to achieve sustainable growth with well-educated investors and a capable, well-paid work force.

The SC2 Challenge consists of two phases. In Phase I, Hartford will invite firms possessing multidisciplinary experience in economic development to compete for financial prizes that will be awarded to the three highest-ranked economic development proposals that best reflect Hartford's economic goals. In Phase II, Hartford will work with the top preferred finalist to develop substantive strategies and innovative ideas for the city to adopt. The final product will be a set of strategies derived from submitted plans that meet the specific economic development needs of Hartford.

###